

REMARKS

Claims 5, 8, 13-14, and 28 are pending. Claims 5, 8, 13-14, and 28 have been amended. No new matter has been added. Reexamination and reconsideration of the present application are respectfully requested.

In the November 20, 2007 Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 5, 8, 13, and 14 under 35 U. S. C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Thorn, U.S. Patent No. 4,329,827 (hereinafter Thorn). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections in view of the claims, as amended.

Independent claim 5, as amended recites:

A hollow panel comprising:
first hollow portions arranged in a substantially same plane and having a first width; and
second hollow portions arranged in the substantially same plane and having a second width different from the first width, wherein the hollow panel includes a pair of flat outer sides which are substantially parallel to each other, ***the first hollow portions and the second hollow portions are disposed between the pair of flat outer sides and a whole of the hollow panel has a homogeneous structure made of wood elements.***

The Thorn reference does not disclose, teach, or suggest the hollow panel specified in independent claim 5, as amended. Unlike the hollow panel specified in claim 5, Thorn does not teach a hollow panel wherein ***“the first hollow portions and the second hollow portions are disposed between the pair of flat outer sides and a whole of the hollow panel has a homogeneous structure made of wood elements.”***

Thorn is directed to a roofing element for the construction of roofs for factory buildings. (Thorn; Col. 1, lines 5-10) Thorn discloses roofing elements including webs 4 made of a fibrous wood-based material and a flange 5 made of wood. (Thorn; Col 2, lines 26-27) Thorn also discloses an upper skin 1 made of plywood and a lower skin 2 made of a thin gauge steel or metal plate. Thorn teaches that the metallic layer is important for purposes of fireproofing. (Thorn, Col. 1, lines 40-60) Therefore, Thorn fails to disclose teach or suggest a hollow panel

wherein *“the first hollow portions and the second hollow portions are disposed between the pair of flat outer sides and a whole of the hollow panel has a homogeneous structure made of wood elements.”*

The Examiner points out that the component 1 is made up of two flat, outer, parallel sheets of plywood. However, there are no hollow portions disposed between the sheets of plywood included in element 1.

Applicants further submit that the Thorn reference teaches away from a hollow panel wherein *“the first hollow portions and the second hollow portions are disposed between the pair of flat outer sides and a whole of the hollow panel has a homogeneous structure made of wood elements.”* In particular, Thorn teaches that one of the deficiencies of prior art hollow all wood structures is that such structures lack fireproofing. (*Thorn, Col. 1, lines 21-29*) In fact, Thorn states that “A roof constructed of elements according to the invention must be covered by a protective layer, such as roofing felt, plastic or sheet metal.” (*Thorn; Col. 3, lines 12-14, emphasis added*) Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 5, as amended, distinguishes over Thorn.

Independent claim 28, as amended recites limitations similar to those in independent claim 5, as amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 28, as amended distinguishes over Thorn for reasons similar to those set forth above with respect to independent claim 5, as amended.

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Independent claim 8, as amended recites:

A hollow panel comprising:
first hollow portions arranged in a substantially same plane and having a first width; and
second hollow portions arranged in the substantially same plane and having a second width different from the first width, wherein
a rod-like member is disposed at a part of the first and second hollow portions, the rod-like member extending over a plurality of the first and second hollow portions,
the hollow panel includes a pair of flat outer sides which are substantially parallel to each other, and at least one of the first hollow portions and at least one of the second hollow portions in which the rod-like member is not disposed,
the first hollow portions and the second hollow portions are disposed between the pair of flat outer sides, and
the first hollow portions have a *depth substantially equivalent* to a depth of the second hollow portions.

The Thorn reference does not disclose, teach, or suggest the hollow panel specified in independent claim 8, as amended. Unlike the hollow panel specified in claim 8, Thorn does not teach a hollow panel wherein “a rod-like member is disposed at a part of the first and second hollow portions, *the rod-like member extending over a plurality of the first and second hollow portions*” or “the first hollow portions have a *depth substantially equivalent* to a depth of the second hollow portions.”

The Examiner identifies a cavity adjacent the element number 2, and a cavity between element numbers 4 of FIG. 5 of the Thorn reference as a first hollow portion and a second hollow portion, respectively. However, the identified cavities do not have a substantially equivalent depth. In addition, the Examiner identifies wooden member 5 of FIG. 5 as a rod-like member. However, wooden member 5 does not extend over a plurality of the first and second hollow portions. Thus, Thorn fails to disclose, teach, or suggest “a rod-like member is disposed at a part of the first and second hollow portions, *the rod-like member extending over a plurality of the first and second hollow portions*” and “the first hollow portions have a *depth*

substantially equivalent to a depth of the second hollow portions.” Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 8, as amended, distinguishes over Thorn.

Independent claims 13, 14, and 28 recite similar limitations to those in independent claim 8, as amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 13, 14 and 28 distinguish over Thorn for reasons similar to those set forth above with respect to independent claim 8, as amended.

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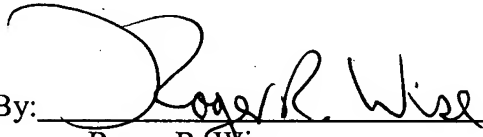
In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, Applicants believe that the claims are in condition for allowance. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles, California telephone number (213) 488-7100 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance should the Examiner believe that such a telephone conference call would advance prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____


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